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4 May 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]
Chairman, DCI Task Force on Linguistic Problems

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FROM : [REDACTED]
Chief, Production Group, FBIS

SUBJECT : Cooperative Interagency Recruiting of Civilian
Linguists

REFERENCES : a. IC 2335-78, Tab C
b. My memo to you dtd 27 Apr 78, Subj: Recruitment
Trip to Western, Midwestern, and Southwestern
Universities

1. In line with your instructions at the 13 March 1978 meeting of the DCI Task Force on Linguistic Problems, we have reviewed and discussed with key people in the CIA Office of Personnel (OP) the options outlined under Task Ia, Objective I in Tab C of the referent memorandum, designed to expand and coordinate linguist recruitment activity.

2. While the concept of an interagency clearinghouse for recruiting needs is appealing, we and the OP Recruitment Division feel that it has pragmatic pitfalls.

a. CIA is the only agency with fulltime recruiters in the field. The number of recruiters has been cut back in recent years, and the few remaining ones are so involved in recruiting for across-the-board CIA needs that it would be an unacceptable imposition to ask them to provide, in addition to their regular duties, any type of clearinghouse function.

b. Because the requirements of the various agencies differ in so many ways (languages are always needed in combination with other skills and backgrounds), it makes sense for each agency to pursue its specific needs directly. Even within CIA, FBIS finds it productive to complement the formal recruitment mechanism with direct efforts of its own.

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3. Alternatively, a simple mechanism such as that described in the attached draft action plan would accomplish the goal of Community sharing of applicant information without imposing undue burdens on any component or disrupting any of the existing mechanisms that effectively serve individual needs. We believe this would be a first, practical step to promote better coordination of linguist recruiting for the Community.

4. We also examined the idea of interagency sponsorship of on-campus foreign-language career days. There is already an abundance of career days. CIA recruiters attend as many of them as they can, with the participation of people from individual CIA Directorates. Other agencies also send representatives. Community sponsorship of career days would, in our opinion, present too high a profile on the many campuses where there is hostility to the intelligence agencies. We would also run the risk of generating excessive expectations among students with only a smattering of foreign-language ability or with skills only in the more common languages. This may be an idea the Task Force will want to come back to at a later date, but we believe there are other near-term options that would have better payoff.

5. We discussed the value of a brochure, describing in generic terms the types of foreign-language careers available in the different departments and agencies. More useful and with greater possibilities of success, in our opinion, would be an annual letter to heads of language departments in various universities outlining our projected linguist needs for the following year. Such letters could be sent selectively to those institutions with strong programs in the critical, hard-to-find languages. From my discussions with department heads during a recruiting trip I undertook in April 1978, I believe such letters would be welcome and would have greater impact than brochures. Background is provided in referent memorandum b, along with a couple of other suggestions generated during my trip which you may wish to consider.

6. The attached action plan encompasses only the proposals to share information on applicant skills and to send annual letters, both of which seem acceptable now to the Task Force membership. We can proceed with these two items piecemeal or further expand the action plan to take in additional suggestions, as you see fit.


Chief, Production Group
Foreign Broadcast Information Service

Attachments:
As stated

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